

Mother-daughter team own and operate early childhood center

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When Holly Sheils had her son, she searched for a daycare center that could accommodate her schedule while also meeting her high standards for early childhood education. But Sheils kept coming up empty. Luckily, one of the best early childhood educators she knew of was already in the family.

Doanne Andresen, Sheils' mother, has a Master's degree in the education of reading and over 22 years experience as a teacher and reading specialist in Brockton. Combined with Sheil's bachelor's in business management, the mother-daughter team had the tools they needed to go into business together. The two Duxbury residents opened the doors of The Kidbridge Learning Center, located in the Pembroke Corporate Park, this past January.

Kidbridge is a haven for parents seeking both quality daycare and flexible hours. The center offers a large space for children to learn and play, with over 7,400 square feet indoors and a 3,000 square foot outdoor playground. According to state regulations, the center can house 80-100 students, but the owners plan to keep class sizes small to give the kids plenty of room and individual attention.

So far, four teachers have been hired, and the center hopes to grow by adding full-time kindergarten in the fall. Both Andresen and Sheils, along with the rest of the staff, are trained in sign language and certified in first aid and CPR.



Mother-daughter team (and Duxbury residents) Doanne Andresen and Holly Sheils recently opened a daycare center in neighboring Pembroke.

The center operates from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, allowing parents to choose either part-time or full-time daycare. The teachers provide each parent with a report card at the end of the day letting them know what their child learned, along with

what they ate—two healthy snacks are provided during the course of the day.

Kidbridge has four main classrooms for various age groups: infant, toddler, preschool/pre-k and kindergarten. Each room is larger than the state requirements dictate and could easily house 14 to 20 kids. But the teachers are committed to keeping a low teacher to student ratio.

"We allow a lot of room for gross motor," Andresen said.

Each classroom also features plenty of interactive centers and toys to keep kids engaged and fulfilled. The kindergarten room, which also functions as a private after-school reading and math tutoring center for first, second and third graders, boasts a computer, along with science and creative writing centers. Favorites in the playroom include a ball pit and miniature tree house. Most of the rooms also have train tables, which Andresen said the kids all love.

Kidbridge also has a curriculum designed to equip children to succeed in early childhood and beyond.

"Early childhood education begins with providing children with the self-confidence and the skill sets neces-

sary to explore, process, question, challenge and extend their environment," Andresen shared.

"Every day, we start with music and movement," said Sheils. "I also do sign language, flannel board, calendar, weather and alphabet."

Sheils grew up in Duxbury on her parent's cranberry bog farm, so she and her mother like to share their love of nature with the children.

"This week, tadpoles are swimming in a small pool at the center," Andresen said. "After the tadpoles mature into frogs, the children will be hatching ladybugs and butterflies."

Kidbridge is accepting enrollment for their new full-time kindergarten, to begin in the fall. For more information, check out their Web site: kidbridgelearningcenter.com. Andresen and Sheils are excited for the future of the center and passionate about the work they do.

"Our goal is to stimulate the children's curiosity about their world, and instill a love of learning and a lifelong urge to explore and discover new things about their world," Andresen said.